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4-7-37
NEW FRONTIERS FOR RURAL YOUNG PEOPLE

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JAN 11 1937
U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio talk by C. W. Warburton, Director of Extension Work, U.S.D.A., delivered in the National 4-H club radio program of the National Farm and Home Hour, January 2, 1937, and broadcast by a network of 58 associate NBC radio stations.

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New Year greetings to 4-H club members everywhere. I especially like the theme for this year's 4-H club radio programs,-- New Frontiers for Rural Young People. It suggests something I often think about -- that there are so many things still to be done, so many facts still to be found out -- that there is much for you young people to do. We who are older know very well that we have a real job ahead to make strong and good the advances made in our frontier days; that is, to build society out to our outposts of science and the arts. You who look to the far horizon have a universe almost unknown to explore.

We are fortunate in the United States in the freshness of our frontier traditions. Many of us have listened to stories of frontier life told by our parents or grandparents who had pioneered, or who had heard these tales from their parents. Our feeling for these early days is the keener because of this personal connection between the early days and now.

I have been turning over in my mind this matter of frontiers and why we like to think of living out on the fringes of civilization. There comes to my mind first, of course, the joy of adventure. As the stories have been told and retold, the wearisome humdrum duties of life have been forgotten and that joy of adventure seems to us to have filled the days. Which tells us, don't you suppose, that it was worth the weariness to have the joy? Then there is that feeling that the frontiersman could make whatever he would of his environment. As the stories have been retold, the hardships and tragedies have seemed less important and the freedom to conquer remained most vivid.

After all, why should we think that these opportunities have disappeared? Certainly many things have been done in the last few years about which most of us had not even dreamed. Many of these results of adventure into the unknown have affected rural life greatly. Radio broadcasting, for one example, unheard of when the 4-H clubs began work. Now the whole world may hear at the same moment a single human voice. We are just beginning to use this new force. We can only guess now what we ultimately may be able to accomplish through those mysterious channels of communication.

Adventures in transportation have brought about achievements which already are affecting farming and farm living everywhere. In almost any small grocery store anywhere we may find fresh fruits and vegetables from Idaho or Washington, from southern California, from Florida, from New Jersey or Maine or some other northeastern State.

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These and other yet uncomprehended new things are ours because of those frontier appeals - the joy of adventure, the desire to wrestle with the unconquered.

No one man or woman accomplished these things. Just as the American frontiers gave opportunity to countless men and women, so these big accomplishments are made up of the bits of achievement by many men and women.

And this leads to another thought about our theme. We have now a membership of more than a million rural girls and boys in 4-H clubs, each pledged to clearer thinking, greater loyalty, better living, larger service. Your slogan is "To make the best better". Making the best better means pushing back the frontier just a little further. Every 4-H club member has an opportunity to contribute his or her bit toward a big achievement that will some day mean much to the community and possibly to the whole country.

Rural boys and girls have real pioneering advantages over their city cousins. Farm life and work continually present new situations. There is much in rural living that challenges us to make the best better. We hear a good deal about farm homes with city advantages, but perhaps we ought to think more about city homes with farm advantages. I should like to see 4-H club people pioneer in the recognition and utilization of the real advantages of country living.

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